

THE BEACON

FOR SCHOOL AND HOME

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THE THREE RAFTSMEN.

Uncle Ben's April Fool Story.

BY ELSIE C. CARROLL.

"**S**AY, fellers, I've thought of the dandiest April Fool we can get on old man Henderson. He goes to the telegraph office every day to see if his daughter over in Ambridge has telegraphed him money to come and see her. He says the last time she wrote, which must have been six months ago, that she said she'd telegraph him a ticket right away, and he calls in nearly every day to see if it's come. Dad always talks nice to him and tells him he'll send me right over with it when it comes, but he's back the next morning, to make sure that Dad hasn't forgot." It was Jack Newman speaking, and the "fellers" crowded a little nearer to him on the lawn and grinned their appreciation of his cleverness.

"You see," Jack continued, "I'll hook a telegraph blank and an envelope from the office. We can write a fake telegram if we want to or just put it in without anything on. I'll take it over, and you fellers can all be out by the gate so you can watch him open it. When he's tickled half to death over it we will all yell 'April Fool!'"

The chorus of approval which followed was interrupted by the sound of a halting step on the path behind the boys. They looked around and responded to Uncle Ben's hearty "Hello, boys"; then as the man passed on to the gate, they resumed their discussion of the prank to be played the next day.

Jack secretly wondered if Uncle Ben had heard, and just what he would think of such

an April Fool. The uncle who was making his first visit for years in the home of his sister was fast becoming a hero in the eyes of his young nephew. Jack would not like to meet Uncle Ben's disapproval even to make sport for the boys. But as his uncle stood at the gate looking off towards the mountains and paid no further attention to them, he concluded that he had not heard.

Presently, however, Uncle Ben came back and sat down, a little slowly on account of his stiff knee, with the boys on the lawn.

"Uncle Ben, tell us some of your experiences," urged Jack, eagerly; then, turning to the boys, he explained with a good deal of pride, "Uncle Ben has been around the world three times. Stories about things he's done are more interesting than 'The Arabian Nights.'" Jack's friends clamored for a story, so Uncle Ben adjusted his position to make his stiff leg more comfortable and began:

"My first story will be one that happened a good many years before I had been around the world or any other place, except in the little town where I was born.

"Let me see, I must have been about the age of Jack here. You're twelve, aren't you? And it was just about this time of the year. This is the last day of March, isn't it? Just about this time of the year—only one day later. My story began on the first day of April.

"When I was young I think boys were a

good deal rougher than they are now. At any rate, our crowd were not the considerate, gentlemanly boys I see to-day. I think I was the leader of the bunch too, and all I have to say in justification of the fact is that I had neither father nor mother. My sister, who is now Jack's mother, and I were raised by a maiden aunt who understood boys about as much as—well, as boys understand maiden aunts.

"We used to take advantage of a strange tradition about the first day of April and make as much misery and cause as many disappointments as there was time for in one day. I think that tradition has been banished to the age of barbarism, where it belongs, now. The world is growing better, and people more considerate all the time." The boys looked at each other rather sheepishly, but said nothing, and Uncle Ben continued:

"The most popular April Fool joke of my day was the ringing of door bells. We would wait until night when people were in bed, then give their bells a vigorous ring and hide to watch them come to the door expecting some urgent message. Of course, we always chose the poor old man or woman who lived alone. There was one house we always saved until the last because the old man who lived there was so queer.

"Old man Heppler was rich and lived in a fine little cottage, but he had little to do with any of the people in our town, and the popular notion was that he was partially demented. I don't think any one had ever taken the trouble to find out just what the old man's trouble was. He afforded us more fun than any of the others of our victims, because he always responded. A few minutes after we would ring, we would see a light in the old man's sleeping-room and he would come to the door all a-tremble, his face glowing with expectancy. When he would find no one there he would stand peering eagerly about and then would call out, 'Come on, my lad. Come to your poor old father! I've forgiven all years ago.' Then he would stand and wait as if expecting some one to appear. After a few moments he would hold out his arms and repeat those words again. Sometimes we would titter and then shout 'April Fool!' but he never seemed to hear us. He would stand waiting for a long time, then he would wring his hands and sort of moan, 'I must have been dreaming again.' Then he would lift up his eyes and mutter some kind of a prayer and go back into the house.

"I learned afterwards that the old man's only son had left home years before and that the father dreamed that he came home one night and asked forgiveness. The dream made such an impression on the old man that he became convinced that it would come true. It seems strange that we could see anything funny in such a pathetic picture as he used to make there in his doorway, but we used to laugh about it for a week.

"Well, on this particular April Fool's day it happened to fall my turn to ring old man Heppler's bell. The other fellows were all

hidden along the hedge. I rang and went to jump off the porch to save time, but I caught my foot some way and broke my leg. I cried out and tried to get up, then I must have sort of fainted. The boys thought I was shamming to carry the joke a little farther, so did not come to help me. When Mr. Heppler came to the door he heard me moaning and came out all excited and carried me into the house. He thought sure I was his boy come back. This scared the fellows, because they thought he was crazy and didn't know what he would do. They were afraid to tell my aunt, so after waiting around for a while they went home, pretty badly worried as to what would become of me.

"Well, I don't know just what happened for a little while, but there was soon a doctor there and I was on a bed in the old man's house. I remember that the next day Aunt Martha came and my sister, but they did not take me home. Infection got in my wound (it was my knee cap that was broken and it had to be operated on) and I was unconscious with a fever for a long time. When my mind cleared I found myself still in the old man's house and he was bending over me. He scarcely left me during the days that followed and it was then that gradually I learned to love him. When I was nearly well Aunt Martha came one day and told me the old man's pitiful story and how he had thought at first that I was his lost boy. She said he had taken a great fancy to me and begged to keep me with him. I finally consented to stay, and from that time on old man Heppler was like a beloved grandfather to me. He seemed to grow younger and his mind cleared. He gave up the hope of his son's return and allowed me to take his place. When he died ten years afterwards he left me neat little fortune. I have been able with it to make my place in the world and do a little good. But always when the first day of April comes around I begin to wonder if there is not some old person I could make a little happier with some of Grandfather Heppler's money. You see I'm not much acquainted here, so I thought if I told you fellows this story you might help me find some one and we could give them the right kind of an April Surprise for once." Uncle Ben stopped and the boys remained silent for a few seconds. Somehow Jack was sure Uncle Ben had heard his plan and he felt his face growing very red. At last he asked a little haltingly,

"Would you want to spend as much as a ticket to Ambridge would cost?"

"Sure," Uncle Ben replied heartily, "and enough more to telegraph the old man's daughter to meet him," and he gave his nephew an affectionate pat on the shoulder as he continued,

"And now, which experience do you want?"

Spring's Dog and Cats.

BY DAISY D. STEPHENSON.

I DREAMED last night that the dog-wood tree
Stood growling and barking in noisy glee.
He'd caught a glimpse of pussies gray,
Who woke from winter naps that day.
But Pussy Willows made reply,
"Oh, you can't scare us—just you try!
We never scratch or purr or mew,
But we're more popular than you!"

Edith's Choice.

BY ESTHER G. BABSON.

HERE is the money for your shoes, Edith," said Mrs. Marston, holding out two crisp two-dollar bills. "Now, dear, get good sensible ones which will last a long time; you know four dollars represents a good deal of money for us, but there is no economy in getting cheap, poorly made shoes. There, run along. If you can get good ones for three-fifty so much the better." Edith raised a rosy cheek for her mother's kiss, pulled rubbers on over the shabby shoes, adjusted her white knitted cap and scarf, and ran down the street to catch the city-bound car.

"Will the time ever come, I wonder," she mused, "when our watch-word will not have to be economy? When I do buy a new suit or hat, mother is always looking ahead for something which will wear well and look in fair style another year, so it's never absolutely up to date at any time."

Arrived at the shoe store, she was waited on by a young man, who looked pityingly at the worn-out common-sense shoes, and old rubbers. As he took the measure of her slender little foot, he said, insinuatingly, "We have some very pretty new shoes just in; tan cloth with patent leather vamps—all the rage just now."

"Oh, I'm afraid I had better stick to the calf shoes which I always get," said Edith, falteringly; but after trying on a pair, she surveyed the square toe and flat heel with disfavor, mentally comparing them to small shovels.

"Might I just look at the others?" she asked hesitatingly.

A fatal look! For having seen them, so dainty and stylish, the arched instep and high heel adding much to their attractive shape, of course Edith wished to slip them on. As the man deftly buttoned them up and smoothed the ankle, he remarked: "A very good-looking shoe, Miss, and fifty cents less than the calf. These are only three-fifty."

Edith's feet certainly did look very small and dainty, and she walked up and down before the little mirror in a state of indecision.

"The heels are rather high, aren't they?" she asked timidly.

"Oh, no, Miss, not nearly so high as some we have. That's not a real French heel. Do you know, your feet look about three sizes smaller in those shoes than in the calf?"

They certainly felt differently from the calf shoes, for they forced her weight forward; but the heels added a little to her height, and, as she had always longed to be taller, this was a consideration.

"I'll take them," she said suddenly. "I don't know what mother will say, but they are so pretty, and you are sure they will wear well?"

"Oh, sure, Miss," said the salesman, glibly. "Wear like iron."

The idea of putting the old shoes on after this, and having the young man see their unveiled shabbiness again as he buttoned them, was too much for Edith.

"You might leave them on, please; they are so,—well,—quite comfortable, but a bit stiff, of course. I'll just take the others in a bundle. Three-fifty, you said?"

With the old shoes and discarded rubbers under her arm Edith walked stiffly to the car. After all, were the shoes quite as comfortable as the old kind? Perhaps she better

have a lift or two taken off the heels. But several people in the car glanced admiringly at the prettily shod feet displayed by the short serge skirt, and that seemed to ease the feeling of discomfort. So it was not until she had opened her garden gate, descended the two steps, and caught her heel, rolling heavily to the ground, that it dawned upon Edith that she was not used to that style of footwear. Mrs. Marston saw the catastrophe, and, running out, helped her daughter hobble into the house, and onto the sofa.

Not a word said mother as she carefully unbuttoned the stiff tan shoes and bathed the swollen foot, and Edith, feeling sick with the pain, could only groan and submit thankfully to the ministrations.

The ankle was only wrenched, not broken or even sprained; for which Edith was devoutly thankful, feeling that she was spared a doctor's bill, also weeks of disability. But it was several days before the swelling went down and she could hobble around with a capacious bed-room slipper on the injured foot.

"Mother, it makes me feel faint simply to look at those new shoes," remarked Edith, at last. "Why didn't you say anything when you took them off that day? If ever any one had a chance to say 'I told you so,' you had that chance."

Mother smiled a queer little smile. "Because, Edith, when a person is having a good sharp lesson from her own experience, it is all that is necessary. It would have been only 'rubbing it in,' as the boys say, and rather unkind, when you were suffering. Now, dear, what are your intentions about the tan shoes?"

"Mother, I was a silly, vain girl, and I never want to see them again; but as I've worn them, I can't take them back. I won't let father lose that three-fifty, so I'm going to have low, broad rubber heels put on, and wear them. It will spoil the whole shape and style, but I don't care. I see the patent leather has begun to crack already, so I'll have my old ones half-soled and get along somehow,—but if ever I see that serpent of a young salesman again"—

"Oh, Edith, don't blame the tempter," laughed Mrs. Marston. "We can't be cloistered nuns, you know; life isn't like that, but it's being in the thick of the fight, and coming out at last victorious, that really counts."

The Luck that Turned.

BY LOUISE M. HAYNES.

DORIS and her brother, Malcolm, were driving along a pretty country road behind their pony, Gypsy.

"What do you s'pose is the matter with Gyp? He's lame all of a sudden," Doris said. "Perhaps he has a stone in his foot."

The children jumped out of the cart to examine the pony's hoofs. They discovered a sharp stone wedged against one shoe, and try as hard as they would, neither of them could move it.

"What bad luck! He can't walk home with that stone hurting him, anyway," said Malcolm. "See that little house in the woods; maybe somebody there can help us."

The children tied Gypsy to a tree and went to the door of the log cabin. They knocked and waited.

A tame fox appeared around the corner of the hut and trotted up to them. Squirrels frisked in all directions, and bluebirds flew

in and out of little nest boxes under the eaves.

"There's nobody home, I guess," whispered Doris. "But perhaps we can pry the stone out with that poker hanging on the wall."

The children hurried back to Gypsy and worked over his foot until the wedged stone slipped out.

When they returned to the cabin with the poker, a pleasant-faced man appeared at the door.

"Thank you for the use of your poker," Malcolm said politely.

As he spoke, the fox, squirrels, and birds came so near the children that they were a trifle frightened.

"They won't hurt you," the man said kindly. "Perhaps you would like to see foxy's home in the woods."

The children followed as he and the fox led the way to a huge pile of rocks on a hillside. Near by was a large camera ready to take photographs.

"The mother fox was killed when the babies were small," the man explained, "and when I discovered them, they were crying for food. Of course I fed them every day, and they gradually became tame, and now I am taking photographs of them with this moving picture camera. If you want to, you may feed them with this food I brought."

The children shyly tossed appetizing bits to the hungry young foxes, while the man took some photographs of the little group, with his moving picture camera.

As they went back to Gypsy, the squirrels chattered and followed them, begging for food.

Doris and Malcolm held it in their hands and the squirrels climbed up their legs to reach it.

"Owl! Owl!" Doris squealed, "their sharp claws prick through my stockings."

The man laughed. "When I exhibit these moving pictures in the city, I will send you tickets to come and see yourselves playing with the foxes and squirrels."

The children waved "good-by" to their friend as they started towards home.

"If Gyp hadn't had the stone in his foot we should not have seen all the animals, nor had our pictures taken by that nice man," said Malcolm, happily. "So what we thought was bad luck, was really good luck, after all."

Some Ancient Verses.

The following verses, though given here in modern English, are said to be six centuries old:

Guard, my child, thy tongue,
That it speak no wrong.
Let no evil word pass o'er it,
Set the watch of truth before it
That it speak no wrong.
Guard, my child, thy tongue.

Guard, my child, thine eyes;
Prying is not wise.
Let them look on what is right;
From all evil turn their sight;
Prying is not wise.
Guard, my child, thine eyes.

The Pacific Unitarian.

There is only one real failure possible; and that is, not to be true to the best one knows.

F. W. FARRAR.



Uncle John's Presents.

BY VLYN JOHNSON.

WHEN Uncle John comes visiting,
He brings such cunning toys
That little Sister Beth and I
Have playthings just like boys.
He brings us kites and trains of cars
And once he brought us drums.
We never know just what we'll find
The next time that he comes.

We always hunt his pockets through—
And what do you suppose
We found this very afternoon
In Uncle Johnnie's clothes?
It was a Top, a truly Top!
Oh, how it made us laugh,
And while it flew around like mad,
He took our photograph!

Mouse Logic.

BY HARRIETTE WILBUR.

"PIONEER life was hard and disagreeable, to be sure," observed my friend the North Dakota farmer (retired). "But it had its good side, too. For instance, a man could strike up a friendship with some wild creature that would be almost interesting enough to take the place of human society. Indeed, I had several such friends in my pioneering days that were far more interesting to me than some people I've seen. I mind a queer little field-mouse friend I had one summer.

"I was living alone in a shack, homesteading. After the spring breaking was done, I had put my plow in one corner of the shack—well, because I had no other place for it. A little field-mouse appeared one day and took possession of the plow. She made her nest down behind the mold board, using dry grass and papers. Before it was finished, even, I had made friends with her by tossing crumbs in her way, and she soon got so tame she'd come and eat with me

three times a day. I'd keep her supplied with crumbs while I was eating, and Jemima—that's what I called her—would sit up on her haunches near the table-leg and eat, holding her food in her fore paws, dainty as a lady. A man gets sick and tired of eating alone, day after day and week after week, and Jemima was the next best thing to human company. We got to be great chums, and I never had to eat alone after I got her tamed.

"For some reason I never could make out, the plow didn't suit her, for after she had been living there about three days, she moved over into the woodpile in the opposite corner of the room. Jemima was housekeeping in the plow when I went off to work one morning, and when I came back the nest was gone. I was afraid she had left for good, but when I sat down at the hinged shelf I called my table, and commenced to eat, Jemima came out of the woodpile and had her share. Maybe that place was drafty, maybe it was just the feminine desire to change that prompted her going.

(Continued on next page.)



THE BEACON CLUB

OUR PURPOSE: Helpfulness.

OUR MOTTO: Let your light shine.

OUR BADGE: The Beacon Club Button.



Writing a letter for this corner makes you a member of the Beacon Club. Address, The Beacon Club, 25 Beacon Street, Boston.

WINCHENDON, MASS.,
299 Front Street.

Dear Miss Buck,—I would like to belong to the Beacon Club. I go to the Unitarian Sunday school every Sunday. I am nine years old.

My teacher's name is Miss Rachael White; she has gone to Honolulu for three months and we all miss her very much.

I have a sister Mary and she would like to belong to the Club also. She is eleven years of age.

Dr. Alfred Free is our minister and we all love him very much.

I have an uncle and a great-aunt that live in Boston and when I come to see them, I am coming to see you.

Your little friend,
MADELAINE DOROTHY GRAY.

SALEM, ORE.,
325 State Street.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to the Unitarian Sunday school. I am nine years old, and in the fifth grade at school. I take *The Beacon* every Sunday and enjoy reading the little stories in it. I also take the *Girls' Companion*. I would like to join the Beacon Club.

Your true friend,
HELEN MARY POLLOCK.

WEST ROXBURY, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck,—Thank you for *The Beacon*. I love the stories.

I am almost six years old.

My papa is the minister of the Theodore Parker Church.

Good-bye,
From your friend,
FREDERICK W. ARNOLD, 3d.

Frederick's letter was very nicely printed by himself.

(Continued from preceding page.)

"Well, one day, when I was haying, a thunder-storm came up and I had to lay off work about five. It was hot in the house, and so I propped the door open and sat there watching the rain pour down. All at once a gust of wind struck the door, and it blew to with a terrific slam. A second later, Jemima came running out of the woodpile with a young red mouse in her mouth. She had been going in and out of the shack through a knot-hole about four inches above the floor, but when she tried to run up to it with the little one in her mouth, she couldn't make it. She'd get a good start and run almost up to the hole, then lose her speed and have to drop back to the floor again. She tried three times to get up head-first, and failed, and then—would you believe it?—she turned around and backed slowly up, a step at a time! Once into the hole, she disappeared into the pouring rain.

"Pretty soon she came back, wet, and made for the woodpile. Out she came with another baby, tried to run up head-first to the knot-hole, dropped down when almost there, turned around and backed up the wall and out of the shack. That time I watched her, and saw her make for the barn.

"The third time, she didn't even try to go up head-first, but backed up as naturally as

HUDSON, N.H.,
4 Library Street.

Dear Miss Buck,—I go to the Unitarian Sunday school. I have two little sisters. Our minister's name is Rev. Manley B. Townsend and we like him very much. My teacher's name is Mrs. Gotz. I like the stories in *The Beacon* and the letters are very interesting. I have not seen any letters from Hudson so I thought that I would write one. I should like to belong to the Beacon Club and wear a Beacon button.

Our Sunday school is in Nashua, but it is not over two miles.

I will write again sometime. I am ten years old.
Your friend,
EVELYN FOSTER.

WOBURN, MASS.

Dear Miss Buck,—I am eight years old. I have traveled to England, Winthrop and Provincetown. I am in the fourth grade in school. My teacher's name is Miss Leighten. I go to the Rumford school. I go to dancing school, too. I have a sister named Dorothy Bennett Linscott. My father is an artist.

Yours sincerely,
VIRGINIA VAN TASSELL LINSCOTT.

Other new members of our Club are Daniel and Jack Stone, Stockton, Cal.; Elsa Doerner, Denver, Col.; Clara Hager, Buffalo, N.Y.; Orville G. Dunklee, Brattleboro, Vt.; Anna A. Wiley, Cavendish, Vt.; Pearl Simpson, Meadville, Pa.; John Marker, Detroit, Mich.

New members in Massachusetts are,—Gladys Hains, Athol; Alice Wayte, Florence; Mary E. Southwick, Leicester; Dorothy Gardner, Nantucket; Ruth Wolcott, Newburyport (who sends an enigma); Lucia Childs, Waltham.

though she had always gone out that way. She kept this up until she had moved six mousekins, after which she made several trips with her nesting materials. With each mouthful of grass and paper, however, she took just enough so she could run up head-first with it.

"Finally, she came back, went to the woodpile, came out empty-mouthed, ran over to the breaking plow and perched there in her old nesting place a minute, then over to the table-leg where I had fed her every meal, then into the woodpile again, then up the wall,—this time head-first, of course,—and off. And as she never came back again, it was plain to be seen that the slamming of that door had struck Jemima as a warning. She evidently thought that an earthquake threatened her precious family, and it was well to get them moved while they were yet unharmed, before that woodpile came crashing down upon them. And, of course, after getting them all safely out of danger, and their warm cradle moved, too, she had come back for a farewell look, all around, and to say good-bye to the old familiar places. Like a true mother, Jemima had put her children's welfare above her own wishes, and had abandoned her dearly loved home rather than keep them in peril. Pretty clever for a mouse, wasn't it?"

RECREATION CORNER

ENIGMA LVIII.

I am composed of 10 letters.

My 3, 7, 10, is an insect.

My 5, 2, 3, is a boy's nickname.

My 8, 9, 6, is to rent.

My 4, 5, 1, 2, 5, is a mistake.

My whole is the name of a General of the Civil War.

GERTRUDE MCINTYRE.

ENIGMA LIX.

I am composed of 33 letters, and form a quotation from "Othello."

My 3, 30, is a pronoun.

My 19, 13, 7, 24, is a brave man.

My 15, 9, 27, 14, is a salver.

My 16, 20, 28, 33, is to detest.

My 31, 5, 2, 23, is a certain time of day.

My 12, 29, 21, 10, is a home for honey-bees.

My 26, 17, 11, 32, 1, is to mend.

My 25, 22, 8, 4, 6, 18, is an object that becomes popular about five o'clock in the afternoon.

EDNA THOMPSON,

in St. Nicholas.

CENTRAL ACROSTIC.

Behead and curtail five five-letter words leaving three letter words. Behead and curtail these in turn and leave the name of a fruit.

1. A prank—An animal.

2. Vapor—A drink.

3. A bird—Moved swiftly.

4. One who ambles—A very small quantity.

5. An anesthetic—An article.

Scattered Seeds.

A FAMILY OF "SONS."

Example: The son of the prairies. Answer: Bison.

1. The builder's son.

2. The clerical son.

3. Anybody's son.

4. The son of a military post.

5. The harmonious son.

6. The son of a successful hunter.

7. A criminal son.

8. A son that blesses.

9. The traitor's son.

10. The son of the intellect.

11. A very famous naval son.

12. A strong son.

13. An inventive son.

14. The fruit-garden's son.

W. S. D.,
in The Independent.

ANSWERS TO PUZZLES IN NO. 24.

ENIGMA LIII.—*Ladies' Home Journal.*

ENIGMA LIV.—Lord Baltimore.

ENIGMA LV.—Captain Miles Standish.

WORD SQUARE.—E R E C T

R E T R O

E T H E R

C R E S S

T O R S O

RIDDLE.—An umbrella.

Answers to puzzles have been received from Caroline Carr, Fall River, Mass.; Reginald Hanson, Quincy, Mass.; and Leslie Booth, Montreal, Canada.

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